



## **Connecticut School Counselor Association**

A Chartered Division of the American School Counselors Association

**Testimony of Lisa Kilcourse  
Elementary School Counselor  
*in opposition of*  
S.B. 1095 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS  
Education Committee - March 1, 2023**

Representative Currey, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, Vice Chair Leeper, Vice Chair Winfield and esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is Lisa Kilcourse and I am an elementary school counselor in Newtown, CT and Director on the Connecticut School Counselor Association Board of Directors. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 1095 - AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS.

Senate Bill 1095 raises major concerns. Stating that school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, aides, or other staff members can have the ability to be assigned the role of a school resource officer is dangerous. Once a school counselor or the like is moved to SRO any mental health and crisis concerns are removed. Students in crisis, due to a safety matter, will not be addressed. As a school counselor, I know that I can trust that our safety is in the right hands so I can then handle the emotional needs of others. I have a working relationship with our security. Many times when a student elopes I count on them to handle the safety while I handle the behavioral concerns. I cannot think of an instance that would be appropriate for me to take the place of our security. We work together to address student and school needs. According to the American School Counselor Association, "Disruptive student behavior is one of the most serious, ongoing problems confronting school systems today (Diliberti, Jackson, & Kemp, 2017). Research suggests such behavior negatively affects classroom learning and school climate (Kremer, Flower, Huang & Vaughn, 2018). To establish and maintain safe and respectful learning environments, school systems must employ adequate mental health personnel and seek effective discipline programs with the commitment and input of all school personnel, including school counselors (Cowan, Vaillancourt, Rossen & Pollitt, 2013). To most effectively promote student achievement and development, school counselors must maintain strength-based relationships with students and, therefore, are not involved in administering discipline." Moreso, "It is not the school counselor's role to serve as an enforcement agent for the school but rather be a significant contributor to the development of the prevention and intervention programs through which problem behaviors are managed and positive behaviors are nurtured."

This bill derails the work of a school counselor and the like. Mental health professionals already are contending with high caseloads and more mental illness support. Our students and parents have been in higher need than ever and this number continues to grow. By stepping into duties of an SRO, lesson delivery, crisis response, individual counseling, group counseling, and any other proactive work will suffer in implementation.

I ask that you please modify this bill. School counselors and the like should not be doing the work of the School Resource Officer as it is in direct conflict with the work and roles. "School counselors have unique qualifications and skills to implement a comprehensive school counseling program that addresses pre-K–12 students' academic, career and social/emotional development needs" (American

**School Counselor Association). This bill directly impacts the safety of our students, staff, and schools both physically and social/emotionally. It also directly impacts the role of the Security and the role of the school counselor.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lisa Kilcourse

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Kilcourse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a stylized "K".

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